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ABSTRACT

The right-to-read effort in Florida is a statewide program to encourage and expand the teaching and learning of reading on all educational levels. The program depends on the coordination of state-level activities with activities of local school districts, colleges, and universities. State-level activities include program development, assessment, management of funds, personnel training, and preparation and distribution of reports on local right-to-read programs. Local school activities include identification of people willing to participate in right-to-read programs and identification of training and resource needs in the community. College activities include providing descriptions of reading programs, preparing and training reading teachers, assisting local school districts, and evaluating reading deficiencies of entering students. A tentative list of reports to be issued by the Florida Department of Education is included. (AL)

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THE FLORIDA RIGHT-TO-READ EFFORT

The Florida right-to-read effort is a statewide thrust to stimulate teaching and learning in the area of reading. It involves professional educators, liabrarians, and interested citizens at the state, district, and local school levels. The program is designed to call attention to learning needs in the area of reading and to mobilize available resources for meeting those needs.

State level activities are monitored and coordinated by the Right-to-Read Task Force in the Department of Education. Activities at the district and local school levels are coordinated by individuals or committees designated by local school boards or superintendents. Activities in community colleges and universities are coordinated by individuals or committees designated by their presidents.

Right-to-Read coordinating groups are encouraged to involve non-school agencies or institutions concerned with education or related social services. The total right-to-read effort has four major components:

1. Planning, development, and communication.
2. Assessment of reading achievement.
3. Identifying available resources and concentrating them on the improvement of reading.
4. Providing training for personnel (professional and non-professional; paid and volunteer).

State-level activities are aimed primarily at program development and communication, along with statewide assessment activities and the management of resources administered by the State. Activities of local school districts, colleges, and universities include all four of the above focuses, building upon state activities and carrying out the tasks associated with the operation of their instructional programs.

How Can A School District, College or University Become a Participant in the Florida Right-to-Read Effort?

It is recognized that each school district, college, and university in the State--along with libraries and numerous other public service agencies--is currently a participant in the Florida right-to-read effort, even though no official action may have been taken. It is these agencies and institutions which are providing instruction and stimulation for reading. The composite of such activities constitutes the Florida right-to-read effort.

The Department of Education is now encouraging each school district, college and university to become "officially" involved in the state right-to-read effort by designating a right-to-read chairman with whom the Department may communicate. The school district or institution may also wish to appoint a task force or committee to coordinate or monitor right-to-read activities within its jurisdiction. The designation of a right-to-read chairman in each participating institution or agency will assure the receipt of information on state activities and activities in other institutions and agencies.

The names of persons appointed as right-to-read chairmen should be submitted to the Department of Education as follows:

In local school districts, the name of the chairman should be submitted to Mrs. Kittie Mae Taylor, Chairman, State Right-to-Read Task Force, Room 363K, Department of Education, Tallahassee, Florida 32304.

In community colleges, the name of the chairman should be submitted to Dr. William A. Gager, Jr., Community College Representative, State Right-to-Read Task Force, Room 523K, Department of Education, Tallahassee, Florida 32304.

In universities and four-year colleges, the name of the chairman should be submitted to Dr. Sam Moorer, University Representative, State Right-to-Read Task Force, Office of the Board of Regents, Collins Building, Tallahassee, Florida 32304.

Soon after they are designated, right-to-read chairmen will begin receiving information on state right-to-read activities and will also receive requests for information on local right-to-read activities.

Planning, Development, and Communication

State level activities in this domain include the following:

1. Preparation and distribution of materials describing the state right-to-read effort with suggestions for local right-to-read activities.

2. Preparation and distribution of periodic reports of local right-to-read activities.

3. Preparation and distribution of periodic reports of right-to-read activities of the Department of Education and other agencies which cross county lines.

4. Development of materials and procedures for training volunteers which can be used throughout the state by school districts and other agencies.

5. Identification or development of materials and procedures for training student tutors which can be used throughout the state by school districts and other agencies.

6. Development and distribution of curriculum guides designed to improve learning in reading.

Local school district activities in the area of program development and communication include the following:

1. Collection and dissemination of information on state and national right-to-read programs.

2. Identification of key people in the community and in the schools who will participate in the effort or who will provide needed support.

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3. Identification of targets for assessment.

4. Identification of targets for improving resource availability and resource utilization.

5. Identification of training needs and resources for training teachers, aides, tutors, and others who assist in the right-to-read effort.

Community college and university efforts in the area of planning, development, and communication are focused on reading programs in the institutions, assistance to local school district right-to-read efforts, and teacher training. The activities, many of which parallel activities suggested for local school districts, include the following:

1. Collection and dissemination of information on state and national right-to-read programs.

2. Assistance to local school district right-to-read efforts.

3. Identification of key people in the college and university for their participation and support.

4. Identification of targets for assessment within the college or university.

5. Identification of procedures for determining specific reading deficiencies of entering students.

6. Descriptions of programs to alleviate reading deficiencies.

7. Identification of types of reading programs (e.g., corrective reading and developmental reading).

8. Identification of targets for improvement of resource availability and resource utilization.

9. Preparation and training of reading teachers.

Assessment

In the area of assessment, the state will collect, assemble, and disseminate information on the status of reading achievement in Florida. This will be done by:

1. Collecting information from testing programs in local school districts employing standardized tests (spring 1971).

2. Conducting a state assessment program using criterion-referenced test items based on specified objectives (fall 1971).

Right-to-read activities in school districts, colleges, and universities should include a review of results from state assessment and also the results from local testing programs. On the basis of such reviews, recommendations can be made for action by the school district, community college, or university to improve learning in reading. Also, local right-to-read chairmen are encouraged to submit recommendations for state action.

School districts and institutions should carefully evaluate current assessment activities being conducted at both state and local levels. In evaluating the assessment programs, questions such as the following should be asked:

1. How does the information from the assessment program contribute to decision-making?

2. Could the information from the assessment program be put to better use?

3. Is the cost of obtaining the assessment information worth the benefits which accrue?

As a result of the evaluation of the assessment programs, recommendations can be made for improving state and local assessment and also for improving the utilization of information which is generated by assessment programs.

Mobilization of Available Resources

The Department of Education administers a number of federally assisted programs which can be used to provide supplementary financial support to the teaching of reading. These include ESEA I (including migrant education), ESEA II, ESEA III and EPDA. The Department of Education is reviewing these programs and identifying ways which they can be used to improve learning in the area of reading.

The State is also allocating resources for developing and demonstrating materials and techniques which appear to be applicable statewide. These include the development of assessment techniques, the demonstration of new materials, the development of personnel training procedures, and the identification of appropriate text materials for state adoption.

On the basis of assessment results, local school districts, colleges, and universities should identify their resource needs. They should then seek ways for making more effective use of present resources. They should also explore means for using untapped resources such as volunteers or student tutors when this appears advantageous. Where necessary, they should recommend reallocating certain additional resources to meet the reading priorities.

Personnel Training

The primary responsibilities of the State in the area of personnel training are (1) to identify statewide needs, (2) to recommend ways for meeting those needs, and (3) to sponsor the development of personnel training techniques which can be replicated. Also, if changes in state regulations are required in order to use personnel effectively, such changes should be recommended to the State Board of Education by the Department of Education.

Local school districts should perform the following tasks for improving personnel training capabilities in their districts:

1. Review and evaluate components in master plans for inservice education aimed at training teachers, volunteers, or tutors.

2. Initiate needed new components for training teachers, volunteers, or tutors.

The above statements apply to training for faculty at colleges and universities as well as training for school district personnel. Higher institutions must be able to secure training for their own personnel when such training will improve the teaching of reading. This includes training which will help college and university faculty who teach (1) correctional and remedial reading to students requiring such instruction, (2) developmental reading for students wishing to increase their reading power, (3) preservice courses for persons who will teach reading in elementary and secondary classrooms, and (4) advanced courses for reading specialists.

The latter two items represent major missions for many upper divisions institutions. These teacher preparation functions should receive careful study. Competencies which should be obtained prior to the completion of preservice programs should be identified and programs should be continually revised until their efficiency at producing those competencies is assured. Higher institutions should also seek opportunities to provide services to local school districts for developing training programs for local personnel. In most cases, such services should consist of a design and development function which leaves the school district with the capability for conducting the program without further assistance from the university. Because of the limited university resources and personnel available, it is probably necessary to focus those resources on the training of undergraduates and on the advanced training of reading specialists.

The State Right-to-Read Task Force

State level right-to-read activities are monitored and coordinated by the Right-to-Read Task Force in the Department of Education. This Task Force serves in an advisory capacity. It meets periodically to deliberate on programs, projects, and program ideas. The results of these deliberations are submitted in the form of recommendations to the Commissioner and Division Directors in the Department. The Task Force does not administer funds and does not supervise programs. Administration of funds and supervision of programs occurs within the administrative units of the Department of Education. The Task Force was established to effect coordination between activities for improving reading which take place in all Divisions and in several Bureaus within the Department. The task force includes persons whose primary responsibilities are in adult education, teacher education, elementary education, educational media, language arts, early childhood education, planning, research, migrant education, exceptional child education, and higher education. The chairman of the Task Force is Mrs. Kittie Mae Taylor, Supervisor of Language Arts.

Tentative List of Reports to Be Issued By the Department of Education

As indicated above, a major function of the State Right-to-Read Task Force is to promote communication on topics related to the improvement of reading in Florida. Therefore, the Department of Education anticipates that the following publications or reports will be issued during the 1970-71 and 1971-72 school years.

1. A description of a project to test feasibility of using the Hackett Reading Systems for improving reading achievement.
2. Results of a project to test the feasibility of using the Hackett Reading Systems for improving reading achievement.
3. The use of standardized tests of reading achievement in Florida school districts.
4. Reading achievement in selected Florida counties: A report based upon results from local testing programs.
5. The objectives to be assessed in the statewide assessment of reading in Florida.
6. Plans for a statewide assessment of reading in Florida.
7. Results from a statewide assessment of reading in Florida.
8. Using results from the statewide assessment of reading: suggestions for local schools.
9. Materials and procedures for training volunteer teacher aides.
10. Materials and procedures for training tutors.
11. The state program for improving reading skills of migrant children.
12. The results of the state program for improving reading skills of migrant children.
13. A report on the ESEA Title I programs which were most effective in improving reading.
14. Recommendations for making effective use of ESEA Title I funds for improving reading.
15. A report on the ESEA Title II projects for improving reading.
16. Recommendations for making effective use of ESEA Title II funds for improving reading.

17. A report on ESEA Title III projects for improving reading.

18. Recommendations for improving reading based on results of ESEA Title III projects in Florida.

19. Inservice education programs for teaching reading offered by colleges and universities in Florida: descriptions and critiques.

20. Inservice education programs in the teaching of reading conducted by local school districts in Florida: descriptions and critiques.

21. Techniques for increasing reading achievement without increasing costs.

22. Developmental reading programs in Junior Colleges in Florida.

23. Developmental reading programs in Florida universities.

24. Contracting with business and industry to improve learning in reading.

25. Instruction in the teaching of reading in preservice teacher education programs in Florida: description and critique.

26. Vocational Education and the Improvement of Reading: Reports from Exemplary Programs.

27. Teaching Adults to Read: What Works Best?